

**Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, September 2, 2011**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist:**

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2. Thoughts, prayers go out to [families in Warwick](#)
3. [School openings](#) getting under way this week and next week

**From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE):**

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6. RIDE releases [Comprehensive Assessment System](#) guidance
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**From the U.S. Department of Education:**

14. Department provides information for [Constitution Day](#)

**Other:**

15. Air Force Association [CyberPatriot competition](#) open for teams of high-school students

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**Action Item Calendar**

**Today (September 2):** Deadline for Education Leadership Council nominations

September 16: Deadline for nominations for Rhode Island Teacher of the Year  
September 16: Evaluators template due  
September 23: Erate funding forms due  
November 15: Deadline for final selections of District Teachers of the Year

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***Note from Commissioner Gist:***

**1. Districts asked to participate in 2012 Teacher of the Year program**

As I noted yesterday at the meeting of the RISSA executive board, I strongly encourage all LEAs to participate in the 2012 Teacher of the Year program. This program is an excellent way for all school districts and school leaders in Rhode Island to honor some of our best teachers for the excellent work they do in our classrooms every day. We plan to hold a ceremony in the spring to recognize our distinguished educators of 2012, and I certainly hope that every district in the state can participate. To enable every LEA to participate in the 2012 Teacher of the Year program, we have developed a streamlined application form, which we have posted on our Web site:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

**2. Thoughts, prayers go out to families in Warwick**

All of us at RIDE and in our schools across the state are deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of two Pilgrim High School students, just before the opening of the school year. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these two young women. I understand that a school psychologist is helping students and others in the Warwick community cope with their shock and sorrow. I hope that the students and teachers in Pilgrim move forward toward a successful opening of school and a great school year, even as they keep these two classmates alive in their memories.

**3. School openings getting under way this week and next week**

I know that Hurricane Irene and the power failures that have persisted through the end of the week have caused you to make some difficult decisions about when to open your schools, both for teacher orientations and for the first day of classes. Most districts that had planned to open this week, before Labor Day, have had to cancel some school days. I appreciate the challenges that you face every day as you manage so many complex systems in your district and as you deal with the many calls and inquiries from concerned parents and others in your city or town. The events of this week have certainly shown us that Rhode Islanders can work together to solve problems we face as a community. I know we all agree that it is of the utmost importance that our students receive a full year of classroom instruction. Fortunately, you have a full school year to adjust your calendar to make up for any school days that you cancelled this week. Even if we're a few days behind our original schedule, let's work together to make 2011-12 a great year for teaching and learning in every school!

#### **4. Districts asked to submit evaluators template – Action Item!**

Our Office of Educator Quality and Certification has sent to all districts that are implementing the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System a template to identify the evaluators for every district and school. Having an accurate list of all evaluators by school and district will help us monitor your readiness to implement and will enable us to keep you updated on who has registered and who is attending each required training module.

Please complete this template and return it to Tim Heavey, [Tim.Heavey@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Tim.Heavey@ride.ri.gov) by **September 16**. We will align this list with attendance at our training module, and we will notify you if we have any concerns about training.

**From RIDE:**

#### **5. RIDE releases new resources supporting the transition to the Common Core**

Please see the following announcement from the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

We are pleased to announce that resources to support your transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are posted on our Web site. The resources include an Introduction to the CCSS Power Point, overview documents providing insights about the connections between the CCSS and GLEs/GSEs, graphics highlighting the structure of the CCSS, an FAQ, and Introductory Guides tailored for various stakeholder groups. Additional items are in the final stages of development and will be posted soon – so, for updates, be sure to visit the CCSS Transition web page, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Division-EEIE/transition.aspx>.

#### **6. RIDE schedules WebEx of NECAP test-coordinator workshop**

Please see the following message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

In addition to the three face-to-face workshops for district- and school-level test coordinators scheduled for next week, RIDE will offer an interactive, online WebEx for those who may be unable to attend one of the face-to-face workshops. The NECAP test-coordinator workshops provide important details associated with the coordination and administration of the grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 NECAP mathematics, reading, and writing tests. These workshops also provide attendees/participants with updates and with an opportunity to ask questions. Dates, times, locations, and registration instructions for the test coordinator-workshops are included below. Please sign up for only one workshop.

Face-to-face workshop information:

- September 8 @ 9 – 11 a.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick
- September 8 @ 1 – 3 p.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel
- September 9 @ 9 – 11 a.m., Providence Marriott Downtown, 1 Orms St.

To register for one of these workshops, go to:

<http://iregister.measuredprogress.org>

WebEx online workshop information:

September 13 @ 9 – 11 a.m.

There is no need to register for the WebEx workshop. To participate, simply follow these instructions:

1. First, join the visual portion of the event:
2. Copy and paste the following link to a browser:
3. <https://measuredprogress.webex.com/measuredprogress/onstage/g.php?d=639764193&t=a>.
4. Enter your name and e-mail address.
5. Enter the event password: necap2011.
6. Click "Join Now."
7. Then, join the audio portion of the event.

If you have a direct phone line, enter your own phone number to receive an automated call. Follow the automated directions to join the event and hear the audio portion of the WebEx.

If you do not have a direct phone line, call one of these phone numbers:

- Call-in toll-free number (US/Canada): 1-877-669-3239
- Call-in toll number (US/Canada): +1-408-600-3600

Toll-free dialing restrictions:

[http://www.webex.com/pdf/tollfree\\_restrictions.pdf](http://www.webex.com/pdf/tollfree_restrictions.pdf)

Event number/access code: 639 764 193

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley ([kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8494).

## **7 RIDE releases Comprehensive Assessment System guidance**

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

RIDE has released the Comprehensive Assessment System Criteria and Guidance. The document will be delivered in hard copy to assistant superintendents and curriculum

directors at the September 15 meeting. In addition, there will be a Comprehensive Assessment System webinar series held weekly throughout the fall and monthly thereafter. Webinars will address how a comprehension assessment system can support LEA work with Race to the Top initiatives, how to use the gap analysis and self-assessment tools in the Criteria & Guidance document, and other topics related to assessment.

To access the document and to register for the webinars, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/CAS.aspx>.

## **8. RTI Elementary Cohort sessions scheduled**

Please see this notice from our Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports:

The purpose of RTI Elementary Cohort sessions is to support ongoing, real-life application of RTI systemic practices at the elementary level in order to increase student outcomes. The cohort will meet monthly on Wednesdays, from 4 - 6p.m. A second cohort on Tuesday afternoons *may be added* if demand warrants. All sessions will be facilitated by Kristen Matthes. For more information on structure and content as well as dates and locations of meetings, please visit:

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/OSCAS/Documents/RTI\\_cohort\\_description\\_Sept\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/OSCAS/Documents/RTI_cohort_description_Sept_2011.pdf)

Districts that wish to participate must designate an individual to represent RTI at the elementary level. Please register with Michele, at NRIC, by e-mailing the following information to

[MWalden-Doppke@nric-ri.org](mailto:MWalden-Doppke@nric-ri.org) by **September 26**:

District:

Elementary RTI point person:

E-mail:

Phone:

Role in district:

## **9. Brochures and letters for students on Diploma System available from RIDE**

Please see this message from our Office of Multiple Pathways:

RIDE has begun delivery of the new student brochure and parent letters that contain, in three different languages (English, Spanish, and Portuguese), information about the requirements for earning a diploma for the Classes of 2014 and 2015. The brochure outlines the basic requirements for earning a diploma, provides short descriptions of available supports and opportunities, and notes a few things that students can do to meet the new requirements. RIDE personnel will complete all deliveries to central

offices or high schools by Tuesday, September 6. Please be sure to distribute the materials to the high schools if materials are received at your central office.

Additionally, RIDE is mailing to every superintendent, principal, and special education director a packet with several informational documents supporting communication efforts of districts regarding the 2011 Secondary Regulations. These packets include the student brochure, parent letters in three languages, the testing sequence for students, and a copy of the initial guidance. In addition, an FAQ has been developed and will be available by Tuesday, September 6, on the Office of Multiple Pathways page on the RIDE Web site.

Please send requests for printed materials to Lauren McCarthy ([lauren.mccarthy@ride.ri.gov](mailto:lauren.mccarthy@ride.ri.gov)). All of these documents will be available online, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/HighSchoolReform/>.

Please contact Karsten Cash ([karsten.cash@ride.ri.gov](mailto:karsten.cash@ride.ri.gov)) with any questions.

#### **10. Beginning-teacher orientations scheduled**

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

The new dates for Beginning Teacher Orientation for Induction will be September 14 and September 28. These sessions will be held from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m., at the Sheraton Providence Airport Hotel, 1850 Post Rd., Warwick. Beginning teachers need to attend only one of these sessions. To register, beginning teachers can go to:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>.

Registration is required, as we need accurate counts for handouts.

We wish you all a wonderful and successful school year!

As always, if you have any questions or feedback, do not hesitate to contact Hilda or Donna:

- Hilda Potrzeba at [hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov](mailto:hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov) or 401-222-8891
- Donna Okrasinski at [donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov](mailto:donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov) or 401-222-8982

#### **11. Common Core books being distributed to districts**

Please see the following announcement from the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

We are pleased to announce that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) books have been or will be delivered to LEAs before the end of the month. More than 15,000 ELA and mathematics CCSS books have already been delivered! If you have not already received your CCSS books, you will be receiving a call within the next two weeks from West Bay Collaborative to coordinate a delivery time. Please contact Karen Ostroff, at the West Bay Collaborative, 941-8353 ext. 102, if you have not received a call to schedule a delivery date and location within your district by September 16. We hope that these books provide some assistance to you as you implement your transition to the Common Core.

## **12. Implementation of evaluation system is under way**

Please see this message from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

The beginning of a new school year is always an exciting time, and this year is no exception. LEAs across the state will be implementing a new evaluation system focused on developing teachers and school leaders and helping them take student achievement to new heights. Training on the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System is off to a great start, and it has been exciting to witness the open exchange of ideas and solutions. Implementing a new evaluation system that provides multiple opportunities for feedback and professional growth is hard work, but it is the most important step we can take to transform all Rhode Island schools into centers of excellence.

Registration for *Module 2* for Building Administrator Evaluators is now open. The training will focus on conducting school visits, analyzing non-observable evidence, conducting conferences, and delivering feedback. Evaluators can register by going to the eRIDE Workshop calendar, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>

We are committed to providing you with the very best support possible as you implement the Educator Evaluation Models in your districts. In addition to the training modules, guide books, and webinars we will offer administrators and teachers, we are developing a cadre of Evaluation Intermediary Service Providers, (*Evaluation ISPs*) to provide on-the-ground support to you. Evaluation ISPs will be assigned to schools and districts in the next few weeks, and RIDE will provide guidance on how to best utilize this additional support. We are excited for the Evaluation ISPs to begin providing on-the-ground support, and we will be in touch soon regarding next steps.

## **13. Certification regulations approved for public comment**

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Yesterday (September 1), the Board of Regents approved for public comment new certification regulations. The Regents will hold public hearings on the proposed

regulations. We will share this information with you as soon as we have it. The proposed regulations are available at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/CertificationRedesign/Default.aspx>.

***From the U.S. Department of Education:***

**14. Department provides information for Constitution Day**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education:

September 17 is Constitution Day/Citizenship Day, commemorating the September 17, 1787, signing of the U.S. Constitution. In recognition, Congress has mandated that every educational institution receiving federal funds take a day to teach about the seminal document. (Note: As September 17 falls on a Saturday this year, institutions may celebrate either the preceding or the following week.) To assist students and educators in their studies, free online resources are available from the Department's Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) Web site, as well as from the National History Education Clearinghouse and the National Archives and Records Administration. For more information, go to:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/constitutionday.html>.

***Other:***

**15. Air Force Association CyberPatriot competition open for teams of high-school students**

We have received a letter from the Air Force Association, a private, nonprofit organization, encouraging Rhode Island high-school students to enter the CyberPatriot competition:

The Air Force Association CyberPatriot competition, now in its fourth season, is an innovative and proven way to draw high-school students to the STEM careers that will fuel America's continued prosperity. By engaging high-school students in an exciting and spirited cyber-defense competition, CyberPatriot allows students to see first-hand not only how exciting the field of cyber security is but also that it is an attainable goal. ...

Teams of five students with an approved coach – usually a teacher – learn to defend simulated computer networks from threats. Teams compete in three online rounds, and the top 24 teams received all-expense-paid trips to [Washington] for the National Finals Competition.

For more information, see:

<http://www.uscyberpatriot.org/Pages/default.aspx>



***RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:***

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>